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ABSTRACT

Written to help parents and children recognize the importance of communication, this publication provides guidelines for parenting children from infancy through adolescence. Initially, discussion focuses on issues related to the nature of communication, parenting, good parenting, infancy, toddlers, and school-age children. Subsequent discussion describes pilot programs developed by the National Institute of Mental Health to improve early parent/child communication, stimulate positive development of the child, and prevent later behavioral difficulties. The infant satellite nursery, parent education in a pediatric clinic, toy demonstrator programs, and toy library programs are briefly described. Several issues related to the teen years, including understanding adolescents, coping with parents, aids to solving conflicts, and special areas of conflict (such as discipline, pornography, and substance abuse) are also briefly described. (RH)

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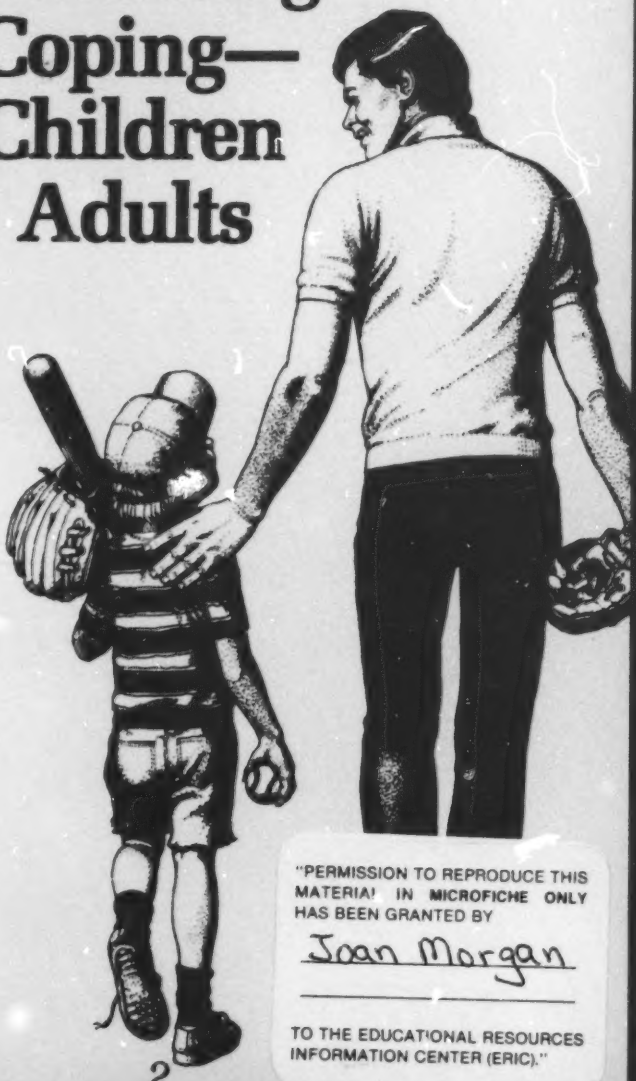

Esther Payne Davis

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INTRODUCTION

Children are the future. . . one of the nation's few renewable assets. Children are vulnerable. Every word, expression, gesture or action on the part of the parent tells the child some message, good or bad, but parenting is a career with no previous training. Good parenting does not come automatically with the birth of a child—or even many children. Since it is a most intimate and enduring kind of career, more than on-the-job training is needed.

"Love is not enough. Insight is insufficient. Good parents need skill," says Dr. Ginott in his book *Between Parent and Child.*

Since the 1960's, a great deal of public effort has gone into developing programs designed to promote the physical, emotional and intellectual growth of children. Head Start, Follow Through, and Sesame Street are familiar examples. Since the mother and/or father is still the most influential person in a child's development, the next step was to provide programs that would teach the parent how to improve communication with the child through work and play, with these goals in mind. The Infant Satellite Nursery, Parent Education in a Pediatric Clinic, Toy Demonstrator and Toy Library, described later herein, are some of the results.

This publication is meant to help parents as well as children recognize the importance of communication.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

From the time of the cave man we have used gestures, sounds, pictures and words to express to another our ideas, feelings and images.

With the invention of the alphabet, man was freed from picture language. Even today, with our many sophisticated languages, man is still using gestures to express himself—nodding his head, frowning, waving a hand to signal.

Communication is talking, writing, listening, thinking (ideas, feelings, attitudes, desires), showing, touching, helping, sharing. It is the means by which people exchange ideas with one another. The most conscious form is the spoken word (verbal). In dealing with children, nonverbal can sometimes be more important and get the point across better than verbal.

Communication has many "assists" to help it along. Experts call it body language: facial expression, posture, use of the hands. A hug can often be a stronger message than "I love you." A smile of approval sometimes means more than compliments. A frown is a silent communication which means disapproval or lack of acceptance.

Body language and spoken words must work together or there will be confusion.

Tom had been working hard to bring his grades up in junior high.

"I guess you have brought your grades up," mother said, but the frown on her face told Tom her real message: They are not up enough.

Somewhere within verbal and nonverbal communication lies the means for parents to influence the behavior of their children.

"My father is unable to feel close to people. His talk is never person to person. It is always station to station."

Is the message you are sending being received the way it was intended?

"I don't think you should wear that cream-colored dress," mother said to her daughter. Robin had made the dress herself and was very proud of it.

"Are you telling me that I don't sew well?" Robin shouted and flounced out of the room. Her mother was not objecting to the dress, only to its being worn on that particular occasion.

. . . The message was obscure. Robin did not hear it the way it was intended.

"If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times."

. . . The message is implied. Make sure the child *knows* what is expected.

"I want you to cut the lawn."

Matthew: "I'm disappointed David can't visit me this summer."

Closed Response: "That's life. Things don't always work out the way we'd like."

Open Response: "I'm sure you are, Matthew. It is hard to have one's plans spoiled. But maybe you can go visit him later."

. . . Closed responses cut off communication.

. . . An open response indicates the listener has heard what was said, and gives a positive suggestion for handling the problem.

Do these situations sound familiar? Communication has always been a complex process, particularly in the family.

"Communication is at the heart of human living, especially in child rearing. Most problems in parent-child relationships can usually be traced back to faulty communication—either the lack of it or inappropriate communication," says W. Wayne Grant, M.D. in his book *Growing Parents—Growing Children.*

PARENTING

Today's parents carry the responsibility of being everything to their children. They can become eager and able teachers of their infants and young children once they have learned to translate their care into skills and attitudes that actually help their child to develop. Many parents tend to underestimate their young children's abilities because they do not know how to bring them out into the open.

To be a successful parent, one not only must have adequate communication but the message must be plain and appropriate, and easily understood.

When parents acquire and use better communication with their children, it has a snowball effect: their skills are noted and transmitted to other children and parents. It is deeply gratifying when their children make visible progress at home and later at school, often far more than they thought possible.

Parent training is no "cure-all" but it does represent ways to reward the child's explorations and triumphs; to guide the whole child toward greater understanding, confidence and competence.

Both parents and their children can learn a form of communication that enriches and delights—using tender loving care when they are small and taking the time to talk things over when they are adolescents.

AM I A GOOD PARENT?

As preparation for better communication, parents first should understand themselves. Most of us try very hard to be good parents. What goes wrong? Simply, that we are persons, too.

The human infant is more dependent upon others than any other newborn creature. Mother wonders if she is capable of caring for someone so small and so demanding. Father begins to worry about his job, does he make enough money, what if he becomes ill. Authorities agree that these kinds of negative feelings are quite normal.

Parents don't have to be perfect. No one else is perfect.

"Even if you were a perfect parent, not only would you be terribly boring, but you would not allow your children to be comfortable with mistakes," says Dr. Lonnie Carton, *Raise Your Kids Right.*

"I am scared if I do something wrong it will reflect on my child's future life," Mary told the doctor when she went in for her baby's checkup. Mary is not alone. Many feel guilt and inadequacy. Don't, say the experts. You don't always have to do everything right, say the right thing at the right time, to be successful parents. A child must grow up with some obstacles to prepare him for adult life. It's important for him to learn that making mistakes is only human.

Most parents have the feeling some time or other that their baby may not be developing properly or that a great illness will strike. Frequent concern and anxiety are normal, even useful emotions. It is when they become everyday worries that serious problems can develop. Resentment is normal. It is not resentment of the baby but of a changed lifestyle. Express your resentments. Then a way can be found to suit the needs of both parent and child.

Fatigue is perhaps the worst and most common condition with which to deal. The mother of preschool children is probably the most fatigued anywhere. Who can do their best when they are tired? There are many reasons for fatigue—a crying baby, trying to keep an immaculate house, poor health, even a poor attitude.

"When I first went into practice, I realized that parents were feeling really burdened by all they thought they had to do, and that they were really self-questioning, wondering if they were going in the right direction or not," says Dr. T. Berry Brazelton of Boston Children's Hospital Medical Center, as stated in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1, 1980. Most doctors look upon treating parents' worries as part of their job.

Unravel, become free of anxiety, listen to your common sense, and be willing to learn, says Dr. Grant, and you will not fear being parents.

Being aware of the everyday emotions and stresses of parenthood, and knowing some of the things to expect, help parents understand themselves better, which, in turn, helps them communicate better with their children.

INFANCY

Communicating With The Newborn by Touch

The first need of the infant is to feel love and security. Because the medical profession dictates that physical contact is not hygienic, newborns are usually isolated in hospital nurseries. Many believe these babies should be in their mother's arms and even held by clumsy fathers. Some hospitals make it possible for fathers to begin communicating with their infants by allowing them to help dress the baby to go home. Babies who have these privileges are likely to be more emotionally stable later on and have fewer difficulties in the adolescent years.

Recent studies show that maternal instinct does not happen at birth but that the pattern for mothering must be learned. It is in this learning process that mother and infant begin to communicate physically. With the new infant, communication by touching is natural—holding, cuddling, kissing, rocking, feeding. Early communication cements a bond.

Baby's Means of Communication

"One of the hallmarks of good parenting is the ability to read signals," says Suzanne Szasz, *The Unspoken Language of Children.*

By certain responses, the newborn communicates with his parents, telling them whether they are on target or if something is wrong.

Baby's first instinct is to use his feet. If you want to know how a baby is feeling, watch his feet. The feet will reach out to a person or object even before the hands will.

A two-day old infant pushing away a blanket covering his face is communicating his knowledge of survival instinct.

Children's body language reveals emotions. Look at the feet, the hands, the soft fluid movements, when baby responds to cooing.

When a mother sat in front of her 3-month old baby for three minutes without changing her facial expressions or making a single sound, the baby turned his head away and curled in his hands and feet.

His first clear communication is his smile. A smile at the age of one or two months tells his parents he is satisfied. At the age of three to four months, he answers his parents' smile with a smile. At six months, he demonstrates more advanced nonverbal communication by pointing and reaching.

He evidences his distress by whining, screaming, refusing to eat. Why? Sometimes, besides more obvious causes, because he is worried. Do babies worry? Evidence has shown they do. They do not worry in the same way as adults do. Their worry is shorter and on baby-level. Parents can best handle this worry mood by giving additional love and providing a calm, familiar environment.

TODDLERS

"At two to three years of age, children's body language begins to grow more subtle as they become aware of what is acceptable." says Dr. Elizabeth Taleporos, consultant, *The Unspoken Language of Children.*

Eyebrow language: both up, surprise; one up, disbelief; lowered eyebrows, mistrust; a hand to the mouth, a signal of confusion.

Children learn to label feelings and know what to cover up. Parents must use their findings to help the child identify his feelings and learn to talk about them.

To ensure good mental health, a child should be surrounded by love the first three years. At three, a child is what he is going to be throughout his life. The six people most important to a young child are his parents and four grandparents. If one of these is nearby at all times the child is much better off, says Dr. Burton White, *A Parent's Guide To First Three Years.*

The first years are the most important in the education of the of the child, according to research in the fields of psychology, medicine and sociology. Early experiences have a more lasting effect.

Many parents, although naturally concerned about their children's development, do not know how best to aid that development.

Converse with your child. Even the very young need to engage in conversation. Studies of neglected children show that those who did not receive verbal communication in the early months tend to do poorer in school.

By the time a child is two years old he has captured the basics of verbal communication. He uses his new prattle to communicate what he has discovered in his world and discovered about himself.

Play with your child, making it a learning experience. Show him how to do something he can later do on his own. Help him put something together—not by doing it for him but by directing him so he gets a feeling of accomplishment.

Large numbers of 3-4-5-year olds are jobless—parents do everything for them. Give your child a chore (within his capabilities) to give him a sense of importance, a feeling that he too is a part of the family group, is contributing something. Children need to experience success at every age.

Teach your child to share. Jill is only three but already Gale is showing her daughter how to share.

"If Santa brings you new toys, wouldn't you like to give some of your old toys to some other little boy or girl?" her mother asks.

Together they select a boxful of useful, appealing toys which they delivered next day to the pediatric department of their local hospital.

Sharing is a form of expressing love, concern, enthusiasm, joy, sorrow, sympathy, all the more worthy human emotions. If a child learns to share, through example as well as discipline, he has made great strides in his development of acceptable social behavior. He will find he has a means of communication with others that is not only effective but gratifying.

SCHOOL AGE

At the time a child is of school age, parents face a more mature child, a growing child, one who will need an expanded set of communications.

Listening

Listening (paying undivided attention) has been called the forgotten tool of communication, yet it is probably one of the most important.

Marsha came home from school waving a big A in front of her mother's face.

"I'm busy right now, I'll look in a minute," mother replied half-heartedly.

"I thought I did pretty good," Marsha said glumly as she left the room.

She had wanted to communicate on the spot while she was excited, but she got a busy signal from mother. Mother was not aware until later that she had let her daughter down. She had not meant to. She loved her, but because of her own preoccupation she had failed to communicate—to listen, to pay attention.

(Not all children are as understanding as Marsha. Some will find ways to get back at parents, which can be quite unpleasant.)

The example of Marsha does not imply that parents should always be johnny-on-the-spot for their children, but it does mean that, on a list of priorities, somewhere near the top, listening attentively should appear.

If Marsha's mother could not stop whatever she was doing at the height of Marsha's excitement, she could have said, "Bring your paper closer to me. You did great. I'm so proud of you."

"When we are too busy to listen to our children, we are too busy. This is a powerful statement that every parent should memorize and practice," Dr. Grant stresses. A child's feelings are respected when a parent listens.

Kerry rushed in the house. "Here it is," she shouted. The report card showed many A's. Mother turned off the iron and swept her daughter in her arms.

"I knew you could do it." Mother not only praised but she told why she was pleased. She recognized Kerry's ability to get good grades. Kerry walked away with a realistic picture of herself.

Some mothers cannot be home to greet their children after school. A note left for the child serves two purposes: the child reads love and concern between the lines and learns of his mother's whereabouts, which gives him a sense of security.

If the child has a little tape recorder he will enjoy the message more because he can hear mother's voice. Recorded verbal messages nurture good communication between parent and child.

Feelings

Often children give feeling messages which have to be decoded to be understood. Feelings are often more revealing than words.

Mark was full of anger when he got home.

"The list was full before our room got a chance to sign up for the snow trip," he complained to his mother. Mother decided on a new approach. She would not say, "There will be other times. I can't help it that the list filled up so quickly."

To herself she thought, he is sharing his disappointment with me by showing his anger. I will help him by showing respect for his feelings.

"I don't blame you for feeling the way you do. I don't think that is a fair way of deciding who gets to go."

Mark learned that under some circumstances, being angry is justified.

When a child is really upset—quite angry—he will not listen to anyone, particularly his parents. He won't accept advice, consolation or constructive criticism. He wants his parents to think he is justified in his anger. He wants to be understood without telling what he is going through. When communicating with an angry child, it is best not to respond to the incident but to the feelings surrounding it, in a positive way.

Humor

When the plane was late, dad became frustrated. His 13-year old son asked, "Why are you upset? It could be worse."

"What could be worse?" father asked impatiently.

"We could be hijacked to Cuba."

Dad laughed, forgetting his irritation.

Humor is an effective and delightful way to communicate. It can be contagious, establish a sense of companionship, relieve a tense moment.

Rewards

How different families handle rewards is an excellent example of communicating.

Rewards can be in the form of points and privileges or material rewards such as money. Praise, Acceptance and Attention are more effective rewards than material rewards.

"That's the cleanest garage I've seen in a long time."

"I appreciate what you have told me."

To be effective, material rewards should be given immediately. Don't promise a trip to Disneyland at the end of the school year if the report card shows so many A's. The goal is too far away. Little rewards along the way are better than a big reward weeks and months later. When he or she brings home a good paper, give your child an extra scoop of ice cream or some other treat.

Some parents use a kind of agreement system. A written one is better than an oral agreement. The agreement would specify the kind of behavior expected and the consequences which would result. If the behavior is excellent, some kind of reward would be in order.

A child should not be rewarded in a material way for everything he does. He should have his chores that contribute to the well-being of the family—emptying the garbage, mowing the lawn, baby-sitting for mother once in a while—to give him a sense of belonging. Small courtesies should be encouraged and verbal appreciation (a thank-you, how nice of you) shown, but not rewarded with money.

Quality Time vs. Quantity Time

"It isn't how much time you spend with your children that counts but how you spend it. Quality time, they call it," says Adeline Daley in the *San Francisco Examiner.* Breakfast out, just the two of you discussing your day over pancakes; a visit to the zoo; or a picnic are all quality times. "It's more fun being a quality time mother, but problems will arise when the quality time child is not up to sharing a hobby with his parent. He'd just as soon have quantity time parents, the ones who serve as den mother, scout master, chauffeur. Actually it evens out pretty much between both groups. The full-time mother probably has no more

time to give her children than the mother who holds a job." Father cannot usually give quantity time but he can and should give quality time if only ten or fifteen minutes a day—playing ball, going out for a special treat or reading to the child. Reading to a child is so important it cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Discipline

Discipline is certainly a most potent form of communication. However, since it is so broad a subject, has so many facets, and is of such importance, it is not discussed here. A wealth of material dealing with discipline as a whole and with specific behavioral problems, such as tantrums, bed-wetting, etc., is available in libraries.

A guide to effective discipline is summed up in Dr. Grant's book *Growing Parents—Growing Children* as follows. Discipline should be:

Reasonable and appropriate to the offense and age of the child
Consistent
Administered in love and with respect
With correction in mind
Open to the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation

Sexuality

Sexuality begins at birth. In the broad sense, sexuality is many things. It is the sex of the person. It is the feelings and relationships between male and female.

"You've got to talk to your kids about sexuality from infancy on," says Ronald Mogilia, specializing in the psychology of children's sexual development at New York University. "Sex education begins at birth. By adolescence, many of the basic ideas are already formed. The best source for sex education is the family."

"Humans are sexual from birth . . . that's when body attitudes begin forming," says Linda Leftoff, Director of Information and Education at Planned Parenthood. "Babies explore and touch. Don't touch, is a negative communicative message."

"Don't give too much too soon," advises Dr. Ginott. "Questions can be answered frankly but the answers need not be a course in obstetrics." The right age to inform a child about sexual matters is when he asks. An adult should refer to parts of the body by their rightful names and from early childhood on, children should learn the names and functions of their organs and the anatomical difference between boys and girls, Dr. Ginott continues in his book *Between Parent and Child*.

"Fathers are probably more important than mothers in the healthy sex development of both boys and girls," states Dr. Henry Biller (University of Rhode Island), *Father, Child and Sex Role*.

"Fathers are vital in teaching children to accept restraints on their behavior to become independent of their mothers, and to acquire normal sex identity," says Rev. Juan B. Cortes, sociologist, (Georgetown University).

Children by age ten or eleven become worried and disturbed if they have not received adequate sex instruction. They will seek out friends and books. This is particularly true of girls. A 9-year old girl can become very confused if she hears only whispered references about menstruation.

It is generally accepted that the father can best tell the son and the mother tell the daughter. Information, however, now comes from many other sources—television, advertising, peers, teachers.

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For anyone interested in establishing training centers for parents in their community, a brief explanation of pilot programs

developed by the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health) follows.

These four practical programs can be adapted to local community needs wherever there are communities willing to make a modest investment that may pay long-range dividends for their children. The training programs are relatively simple and inexpensive to implement. They are likely to offer rich rewards not only to the children but to their parents as well.

Their purpose is to improve early parent-child communication; stimulate positive development of the child; and prevent later behavior difficulties.

INFANT SATELLITE NURSERY

A home away from home is the dream of many working mothers with infants and toddlers. Day care centers may be appropriate for older preschoolers but younger children thrive best in an intimate, home-like setting. These homes should be licensed, not overcrowded, and run by people who understand and can respond to the special needs of the very young. The custodial care may be fine but do the homes offer intellectual, social and emotional growth?

Family day care homes can be created as "satellites" of local day care centers. The ideal satellite nursery would be five children under the age of three. The caregivers (who act as teachers) would have undergone careful selection and training. The Nursery would have these goals:

To provide excellent home-based child care for infants and toddlers of parents who must be away from home

To provide very young children with the kinds of experiences that would help them realize their best potential

To establish a closeness between child caregivers and the parents to help upgrade the quality of parenting in the children's own homes

The program would include:

A sponsoring agency with staff members

Women or men willing and able to undergo screening and training to work in the Nursery

Special curricular materials

Helping children learn, guiding their behavior, and involving parents are the major topics of the training program.

Parent Involvement:

Encouraging parents to deal directly with the caregivers

Compiling a parent handbook (outlining the policies, lines of communication, responsibility of parents and caregivers)

Home visits with parents

Communicating with parents directly (notes and phone calls)

Other communications with parents (socials for parents, children and staff).

PARENT EDUCATION IN A PEDIATRIC CLINIC

The scene is familiar to everyone who has ever had a child or visited a pediatric outpatient setting. The waiting room overflows with restless children. Infants wail. Mothers are bored and nervous. In a pediatric clinic, the mother parks her children in the playroom while she thumbs an outdated magazine, always waiting.

How can this waiting time be spent more constructively? By transforming the playroom in the pediatric clinic from a parking lot for children into a learning laboratory for parents, children and staff; a place where parents can pick up pointers they can communicate to their youngsters for developing intellectually and emotionally.

How a pediatric clinic works: Parents visiting the clinic with their two and three-year olds are invited to participate in the playroom program. They learn play skills they can use with their children at home. Parents at first are observers. Then after individual training they can use their new skills on their own children.

Trainees show parents how to interact verbally with young children while labeling and sorting for color or size. They emphasize the need for praise and encouragement from the parent as the child progresses.

The program emphasizes the importance of the parent-teacher providing the child with rational explanations and optional solutions. Parents are advised to attach words to actions because the child requires direction and instruction to learn.

An existing playroom can be used or a community-based child health station. The best kind is a playroom visible to parents as they sit in the waiting area. It gives them an opportunity to see other parents participating.

Teachers who compared children who had been to the Pediatric Training Clinic with those who had not, report those who had attended adjusted extremely well to the classroom. Their experiences gave them skills in handling materials and allowing them to participate more effectively in school activities. The program also helps parents to accept greater responsibility for their role as their children's teachers. They admit that education is their responsibility as well as the teacher's. They notice behavorial changes such as an increase in attention and improved cooperation with other children.

TOY DEMONSTRATOR

In some areas of the country, trained home visitors come regularly to the home to demonstrate growth-promoting play skills. Parents watch, follow suit, and soon learn new ways to communicate.

Each week a new toy is demonstrated. The second week is a review of materials used before. At each visit the Toy Demonstrator brings a gift that 2½-year old Ryan can keep—either a toy or a book. The Demonstrator puts them in a special box which is also a gift. She reads from the new book she has brought or shows him how to fit the new puzzle into the right shaped holes. After a while, she hands the book or toy over to mother and asks her to continue. Mother learns how to communicate in a relaxed way she enjoys too. The Demonstrator does not forget to hug Ryan and tell him he's doing great. Little children should not be pushed or punished if they are not in the right mood. At the end of the sessions, mother notices that Ryan has made great strides. He knows more and can communicate more than any of her others when they were Ryan's age.

Communicating can be a fun thing. Nicole found a tom-tom in the Demonstrator's bag and began to beat on it. As she marched around the room, mother joined in the fun, singing, saluting and clapping hands. It was a good lesson in body language; a good interaction between mother and child in a different, fun way.

TOY LIBRARY

The toy library offers cultural enrichment for neighborhood parents and children. It helps prepare youngsters for the school years to come. It is a place where parents can enhance their parenting skills. Unlike other libraries, this one is noisy and bustling with adults and young children talking, playing, sometimes singing. But it is a place for learning. It does have books, but its main resource is good toys to use and borrow. The toys are of a

wide variety of the kinds that help preschoolers expand their mental and physical abilities, especially when adults guide their play.

Toy libraries have been around for quite some time but are still relatively rare. Scattered around the country, they are growing in popularity. They are a simple and inexpensive way to enrich community play resources for children. One was established in Washington, D.C., when a fading Victorian rowhouse was transformed into a handsome toy library that also served as a neighborhood child development center.

Besides the toy-loan program, a toy library can be the activity center where staff, parents and children can work together, with parents becoming more aware of their own crucial roles as their children's first teachers.

The toy library works very much like a regular library. A registration form is filled out and one toy and one book a week is borrowed by new enrollees. The toys are designated for three age groups: infants, toddlers and 3 to 5-year olds. Children and parents participate in social get-togethers, movies, story readings, puppet shows and music.

Staff members subtly guide parents in the selection of appropriate toys and encourage them to use those requiring verbal interaction between parent and child.

The library's activity program meets the members' various needs—free Red Cross First Aid courses for parents, cooking classes, regular films and discussions on early childhood problems or accomplishments, family health, parties, field trips, art sessions. The toy library is not merely a warehouse for toys but an attractive family meeting place.

The functional areas of the library should be: display and play space, a check-out area, toy maintenance area; storage space; space for special activities.

Parents have noticed changes in their children's behavior since participating in the library program; verbal changes such as—"his speech is better," "he wants me to read to him," "he asks more questions." It also increases the parents' sensitivity to their children's behavior, particularly verbal behavior.

Models from which to choose:

An independent library where both parents and children can come

One as part of an ongoing child-oriented organization or setting (such as a day care center, nursery school, or well-baby clinic)

One within other community facilities (such as a public library, public or private housing unit, church, or community center).

A toy library can be used to other advantages. Toys from the main toy library could be circulated to other areas of the community (such as housing projects, preschools, day care centers).

*****

The Infant Satellite Nursery was designed by Marion Kagan, Doris Crowell, Jean Fargo and others. For further information, write to:

Doris Crowell or Marian Rauch
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THE TEEN YEARS

After five years of age your son is your master
At ten your slave
At fifteen your double
And after that your friend or foe

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEENAGER

"I used to think I was a pretty good father," a man said to his friend, "but now that my son is in high school, I feel I have to start all over again learning how to be a parent. I don't understand him and he sure doesn't understand me."

"With a teenage daughter in the house, I feel like a yo yo. Sometimes I am up and sometimes I am down," remarks a mother.

These kinds of statements are heard in many households today.

For some parents it is like a stranger has come to live in their home. It is easy for obedience and agreement to fade into the background and for rebellion and dissension to arise. When this happens, family life is disrupted. To avoid this as much as possible, parents find they have to shift their p[illegible]ion.

"Working on the generation gap begins now and works in both directions," says Cleo Eulau, psychiatric social worker at Stanford Medical School. "Growing up is a process of simultaneously letting go and holding on. I don't know any parents who do this exactly right. I don't know any kids who do either. Parents have limitations and blind spots, but fierce loyalty."

The child is changing from a dependent minor to a dependent/independent young adult. His reactions to his parents and his world vacillate between mature and immature responses. The parents, too, must change their reactions. They must learn to accept the developing independence and maturity of their teenager and help him grow into a responsible adult, but they must, at the same time, recognize that there is still much of the child in him that needs the reassurance of parental discipline and guidance. If parents are slow to criticize but quick to sympathize, their adolescents will continue to trust them and confide in them.

Positive View of Teenagers

"Teenagers are doing the very best they can, and they are not out to get parents. They don't hate their parents; in fact, many are worried about their parents, that they smoke too much or change partners too much," says Helen Bottel, *Parents' Survival Kit.*

Parents owe their teens sound and reasonable explanations for the rules and demands they make. The teen, in turn, must get in the habit of thinking about his own general health and welfare. Parents should remember that when an adolescent rebels, it does not mean a lack of honor or respect. A certain amount of rebellion means the young person is encountering adulthood. Tolerant parents will accept a little hostility, realizing that this too will pass and understanding will come again.

Parents who are raising pretty good kids still get scared. They are fearful about their ability to communicate effectively to

their adolescent. They worry that he will get into the wrong crowd. Not enough is heard about the kids who are turning out well. Parents are not the only people who shape a child's development. There are peer influences, school, and others.

Peer pressure is not easy to resist. It takes a strong, secure person. Adolescents need to be more sure of themselves. When families find they are second to their child's peers, they need to create a calm atmosphere and talk things over, without showing shock at what might be discussed, or becoming angry.

Young people want to be accepted totally in their actions. They like to be guided, not goaded, and are motivated by acceptance or rejection.

Daydreamers

There he sat a placid picture in the warm sun on the grass, his eyes half closed and a contented smile on his face.

"Why aren't you mowing the lawn? Haven't you done anything since you've been home from school?" his mother demanded angrily.

Parents worry about teenagers wasting time. Yet, say Drs. Joel and Lois Davitz, fantasy has several important functions in a young person's development. In daydreams, adolescents can try out different roles as they search for direction in their lives. Daydreaming increases their motivation to achieve.

"A first airplane flight when I was eight started me daydreaming," says Diane, today a flight attendant for a major airline. "I was so thrilled, I began to picture myself in adult life, wearing a trim uniform and smiling at all my passengers as I carried trays of attractive meals down the aisles."

According to Jerome L. Singer and his associates at the Institute of Psychological Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, most people's daydreams tend to serve a useful purpose and are attempts to explore the future through "trial actions." They are efforts to determine in advance the consequences of certain acts and situations. If the daydreams become less rosy, the daydreamer decides this is definitely not for him. The study shows the daydreamer to have a higher degree of self-awareness, to be more conscious of himself as a person, to have more creativity, resourcefulness and capacity for original thinking.

On the other hand, the study shows that those who do not daydream are more contented with their lot than others, have a greater ability to take misfortunes in stride and are more willing to compromise.

Telephone-itis

Most teenagers are affected with this disease. They tie up the phone for hours at a time. Some of that time, there is only silence at your end. It becomes an exasperating problem. A good solution, if it is possible, is to give him his own phone and have him pay the monthly bill. Lacking that, he should be restricted to times when other members of the family do not need to use it.

If parents knew that their teenager was checking out the world with his friends, and getting a realistic view of himself and others, they might well consider this a worthwhile communication, say Drs. Joel and Lois Davitz.

If there is a major decision to be made, by hearing each of his friend's opinion, a teenager will be satisfied that it is the right decision. The 2-3 hour time spent on the phone seems to be the stamp of approval that the right decision has been reached. One boy spent three hours on the phone with his friends before he decided the snow was not right for good skiing. He also is learning to be a good listener.

Teens: "Why do we need families? We're old enough to take care of ourselves."

Parents: "You are able to take care of your physical requirements and in general make your own plans but everyone regardless of age has inherent feelings for someone to love them, despite their faults. Families are the only ones who will do this 100%. Friends will to a certain extent but it is the parents who are ready to welcome you back after the misunderstanding has settled down. We stand in back of you in everything you do as long as it is rational and right. The home offers security, a source of protection. Families make things easier. We admit we are not as understanding at times as we could or should be. Being the parent of an adolescent is a totally new experience and we try to do what we think is best."

It takes some parents longer to arrive at the point where they realize their adolescents are perfectly capable of making their decisions. It can be a long road. Independence must share the ride with compatibility and patience. Each family travels at a different speed, depending on the needs and relationships of all concerned. Growing up usually doesn't happen in a straight line; some trial and error is to be expected.

The frustrated adolescent tends to blame his parents for putting road blocks in front of his desires and plans.

Parents have a lot invested in their children—long years of work and sacrifice. It is difficult for them to relinquish their hold all at once. They are so used to giving advice and instructions, they must taper off gradually. Even if adolescents are totally capable of taking care of themselves, there remains one area where parents are responsible. They must pay medical expenses and take care of their youngsters in case of illness.

What Teens Can Do When Mother and Dad See Things Differently

From the time you were small you believed and accepted everything your parents did and said. As you grow older, you see others' points of view—teachers, business people, news media –which differ from your parents. Which side do you take? You thought your parents could never be wrong. Now you find they can be wrong sometimes. It is now time to study the subject on your own. Don't adopt others' views, but learn all you can at the school library, public library, by reading newspapers and periodicals, and then after giving the matter deep thought, arrive at your own decision.

Teens must remember that parents are people too, with likes and dislikes just like everyone else. They have feelings and can be hurt, despair, and get angry. They like a good time, trips, friends of their own. Do you wonder why parents are like they are? Perhaps because of their early training and how things were in their families. They probably had to go through the same things you are going through now.

As you grow older, one day you suddenly see your parents as people—individuals with characteristic personalities. You notice little personal habits which irritate you. Dad drinks his coffee in a funny way. Mom doesn't dress or act like other mothers. Maybe the family budget won't stretch far enough to allow her to go to the beauty shop or have a new dress in the latest fashion.

Did your folks get to accomplish all the things they dreamed of in their youth? Look deeply within their lives and appreciate them as persons trying to climb the ladder of success, sometimes faltering. When you understand your parents better, their attitude toward you will be changed for the better.

COPING WITH PARENTS

Parents and adolescents, understandably, are on different wave lengths and often adolescents wonder if their parents ever had

difficulties themselves when they were teenagers. Were they perfect? Did they always know how to act, never felt insecure or scared? Teenagers see their parents as more human when parents will admit their own shortcomings and frustrations.

Teenagers in Palo Alto, California are doing something more than just complaining. At their high school, they organized a workshop, calling it "Dealing with Parents." They get together and discuss their problems and try to find solutions for them.

"When I came home, my parents always asked me what I did, and it was a big pain," one student complained. "Now," he said, "when they get home after an evening out, I ask them, 'What did you do tonight?' They don't bug me so much any more about that."

AIDS TO SOLVING CONFLICTS

Children are people. If they are treated with respect, they respect. Teenagers snap back when they are snapped at. Rules coated with respect have a far greater effect than rules showing barbs of harsh words. Respect gives a child a sense of self-worth which enables him to deal better with events and people.

An easy way to kill communication is to remind the teenager of his deficiences. Parents forget, when they are trying to make their son or daughter perfect, that they are actually just being aware of their own imperfections.

"The new code of communication with children is based on respect and on skill. It requires that messages preserve the child's as well as the parent's self-respect," says Dr. Ginott in his book *Between Parent and Teenager.*

The effectiveness of each channel of communication is dependent on a mutual respect of the other's rights and worth as an individual.

What A Difference A Little Listening Makes

Hebrew sages said, "The beginning of wisdom is silence; the second stage is listening."

A good listener is popular. His listening attentively makes the speaker feel important. To be a good listener, focus all of your attention and self on the speaker. An easy, relaxed posture and eye contact shows interest. When it is your turn to talk, don't monopolize the conversation. Be a short speaker and a long listener. There is an old saying, "When you are talking, you are not learning anything."

Brief comments such as "You don't say," "I'm surprised to hear that," will not only encourage the speaker but will sharpen your own interest.

The real message may be hidden behind unspoken words. A good listener learns how to react to things unsaid. "You treat me like a baby." A wise parent reads hurt and frustration behind such explosive criticism and makes allowances for the outburst.

Listen before pronouncing sentence on someone. The surest way to sever all lines of communication is to make judgment before listening. It is important to let young people know there is a vast difference between approval of their behavior and approval of them as persons.

The parent who listens, really listens, tells his child that the child's ideas are valued.

"My son told me in detail about a movie he had just seen. He was so pleased when I said, 'Sounds like a good movie. Maybe Dad and I can go this week-end.'"

In his book *Parent Effectiveness Training*, Dr. Thomas Gordon lists "Door-Openers" to help get young people to talk. "I see." "I'm interested in how you see it." These kinds of responses do

not communicate any of the listener's own ideas or judgments, and more importantly, they keep the door open and encourage the child to go on with his story, not clam up.

"We think listening is easy, but it isn't. True listening means exposing oneself to the fright or rage or despair of another person, and, perhaps to those same feelings within ourselves," says Dr. Irwin Rosen, Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas.

"No, I won't listen," forces children to keep their troubles to themselves. "Take the time to listen. The child who is unable to get his problems off his chest and onto his tongue has little chance of getting them out of his way," says Dr. Lonnie Carton, child psychologist-teacher, Tufts University, Mass.

Have You Hugged Your Teenager Today?

How long has it been since you have patted your daughter on the shoulder or ruffled your son's hair to show your love and pride?

Touching is perhaps the most effective of all channels of communication, and the most neglected.

If a youngster is in trouble, is disturbed or withdrawn, the best kind of communication is a hug and a soft word from a sympathetic adult. The nonverbal communication he will receive is, don't let it get you down. You have someone on your side.

After disciplining and the penalty period is over, it is not out of order to emphasize your reassurance with a hug of forgiveness.

One observant judge said that in all of the many juvenile offenders and parents brought before him, not once has he seen a parent put a protective arm around his youngster. Most parents express their love for their children in a material way, providing all their bodily needs. What they fail to realize is that everyone

needs expressions of love and approval through touch—a hug or a kiss—not as a once-in-a-while reward for good behavior but daily, and for no reason at all other than that he is loved.

Let's Laugh

Laughter is the universal language of good humor. It is a delightful way of communicating that is far too often neglected.

It should be cultivated and shared. It can relieve tension, sweeten the disposition, brighten a dull day, and create a feeling of companionship in a very special way.

If parents and teenagers could learn to laugh with each other, not at each other, half their problems would be non-existent, insists one psychologist.

Consult With Your Teenager

Alice works part-time at the local hamburger stand. When her mother tries to tell her how to spend her money, she protests: "It's my money."

Rather than lay down the law as to how money should be spent, when teenagers are to work, their curfew hours, etc., the parent should play the role of a consultant. Sit down and discuss the problem with them; let the child express his own ideas. Point out the possibilities, the consequences, the goals to be attained. Your child may surprise you with his own good sense, and, in any case, he is learning how to meet problems and make decisions.

Johnny comes home much too late. His parents are furious with him. Threats are hurled at him. They don't listen to his excuses, and resentment on both sides is built up and doesn't just melt away.

Each family's standards are different, says Dr. Lee Salk, but there are certain guidelines parents can adopt: communicate to your son or daughter that you know he or she is growing up and becoming more independent and responsible; that you are glad and want this too, but you wouldn't want anything bad to happen to them. You can't force them to be home on time, but after a certain hour you do begin to worry. Tell them you would like to work out some system of communication with them so you will not worry so much. In this way, respect is shown.

Most teenagers will be willing to go along with some kind of arrangement to reduce their parents' anxieties as long as they are not treated as irresponsible helpless children.

How To Say "Don't"

Dr. Thomas Gordon describes the effective way to say "Don't" in his book *Parent Effectiveness Training.*

Ineffective methods always start with "You." "You quit that." "You interrupt too much." "You always . . . " You-messages cause the teenager to think of only his side of the problem and he usually reacts resentfully.

I-messages are more effective in getting the person to change his behavior. "I don't feel like driving you to the skating rink, I am too tired." "I get discouraged when I see muddy tracks on my clean kitchen floor."

I-messages are less likely to cause the child to resist and rebel. They also strengthen the parent-child relationship. To communicate to a young person honestly the effect his behavior has on the parent is much better than to suggest there is something bad about him. I-messages help a youngster to mature since the responsibility is placed on him. The I-message is honest communi-

cation, and, in turn, it influences the child to return an honest message.

Comparisons

Some call comparisons the most unfortunate of all child-rearing communications. Any kind of comparison is implied criticism and it usually hurts. Parents are not immune.

Mother has just baked a chocolate cake, and Tim says innocently, while gulping down a large peice, "Boy, you ought to taste Brian's mother's chocolate cake." How do you think mother feels?

Sally and Wendy are 15-year old twins. Their personalities are entirely different. Sally is a shy, sweet girl, who obeys most of the time. With Wendy, more patience and understanding is needed. Their mother finds herself screaming at Wendy, "Why can't you be more like Sally?"

A father was shown the cabinets his neighbor's teenage son had built for the family room. Later he asked his own son, "Why can't you build something? We have been waiting a long time to get our sundeck built." The son walked away in anger.

If the father had wanted these tasks done he should have asked his son to do them, rather than insinuate that his son was not as capable as the neighbor's son. Comparison makes anyone feel inferior.

Maybe your child is not happy with himself. Know what his talents are and help him to develop them. Don't expect him to develop talents you wish he had.

Kevin was a sophomore in high school. On the baseball diamond he could hit a home run, but he never enjoyed reading; in fact, he had never learned to read very well, and as a result was not

a star pupil. His sister was. His parents' obvious satisfaction with her accomplishments could have been a real problem for Kevin. However, when playing in a game seeing his parents in the bleachers, wildly communicating their joy and enthusiasm, helped Kevin retain his self-esteem.

General achievement is expected, but within everyone there are certain talents. They may be quite limited but they can be developed and personal satisfaction enjoyed when those talents are used. The concerned parent communicates this message to his or her adolescent.

Need For Privacy

Each of us is an individual, belonging to himself. We all have a private world we do not want to share with others.

"When I return from a date, mother wants a blow by blow description of my whole evening," complains a 17-year old girl. "It isn't that I have anything to hide; I just don't always want to tell her everything."

Not every teen can have a room to himself, but he should have some space, if only a bureau drawer, that is off limits to the rest of the family. If he has his own room, it is not unreasonable for him to expect people to knock before they enter. This need for privacy works both ways. The parents, too, need their private room and their private time.

Why Are Good Manners Important?

"Good Manners" simply means that we act toward others in a way that does not offend. If we are considerate, good manners come naturally. It is not necessary to consult a book on etiquette, although that can be helpful in handling certain social occasions.

In order to be approved of and accepted by people we meet, we must show respect not only for their rights but also for their feelings and beliefs.

If your parents object to your smoking and you are determined to do it anyway, it is only good manners not to smoke in front of them. If grandma doesn't like you to come to the table without a shirt on, it is good manners to dress to please her. Using good table manners is another way of showing respect.

Other ways we show good manners are a smile, a pleasant tone of voice and through the words we use: thank you, please, May I? Do you mind? 'Thank you' in particular is an important means of communication. It expresses recognition of another's thoughtfulness and appreciation of it. It can't be used too often nor for too small an occasion. So many parents forget to say 'thank you' to their children for little courtesies shown, and so many children forget to say 'thank you' to their parents.

Good manners are the lubricant that keeps the wheels of any society running smoothly, and certainly they pave the way for a better relationship between parent and child.

SPECIAL AREAS OF CONFLICT

The following areas are dealt with only superficially as there is a great deal of material available that considers these problems in depth, which should be consulted.

DISCIPLINE

"Success in disciplining teenagers will depend directly on the type and quality of relationship parents have established with the child during the formative years," says Dr. Grant.

"Parents still need to set certain limits on the teen's behavior concerning chores, grooming, curfews, etc., with mutual agreement if possible. They should enforce these limits through rewards of praise and acceptance, by controlling or giving privileges such as the use of the car, etc. They should not set petty rules. They must be firm when it is really needed, and, otherwise, let the teen grow up and take responsibility."

Parents should not be turned off if their teenager expresses hostility, impatience and frustration, if his manner is not disrespectful.

"Do you know that the surest way to eliminate bad behavior is by ignoring it? That children give as many social rewards and punishments to parents as they get? That observing bad behavior for a while rather than instantly suppressing it can often give more insights, and help chart later success?" ask Wayne R. Bartz and Richard A. Rasor, in their book, *Surviving With Kids*

Dr. Ginott gives the following advice on discipline: "Allow the child, under certain conditions, to speak out about what he feels, but limit and direct undesirable acts. Limits should not be arbitrary nor fanciful, but educational and character-building. Limits should preserve the self-respect of the parent as well as the child.

"Most parents see the problem of discipline as being either strict or lenient, tough or permissive. As a power struggle. A fight to see who wins, says Dr. Gordon in his book *P.E.T. (Parent Effectiveness Training).* "Parents lose influence by using power. They will have more influence by giving up their power or refusing to use it; or if their methods of influence do not produce rebellion or reactive behavior. Non-power methods are likely to cause the youngsters to consider their parents' ideas or their feelings, and as a result, modify their own behavior."

"Teenagers can be disciplined without being stifled," says Helen Bottel.

The best recipe for discipline: temper your guidelines with compassion and apply this mixture with firmness. Communicate positiveness, not permissiveness, and after the disciplining is over, show your child with a kiss or a hug that you still love him.

Dealing With Sex

Parental attitudes about sexuality are the strongest force affecting the child. Other sources such as peers, movies and the media will fill the vacuum if kids lack the information at home. Scare tactics such as fear of pregnancy or venereal disease aren't an effective form of sex education, says Ronald Moglia (New York University). He suggests a sex-education program, based on community values, to be part of the regular curriculum in grades K through the 12th, with the council comprised of parents, teachers and community leaders. The council would choose from a range of teaching materials what they wished taught in their school. A Mennonite community might have a whole different curriculum from a D.C. community. As important as a good school sex-education program is, it's not a substitute for parental teaching at home.

Not talking about sexuality is communicating something too. You can't be raised in this society without getting sexual messages from others. If parents want their kids to get their values, they've got to communicate to them what their values are, Moglia says.

"A self-image doesn't suddenly start develping when a child reaches puberty. Human sexuality is part of the total personality. Kids read their favorite books over and over. Children want to hear the story of life over and over again," says Linda Leftoff (Director of Information and Education at Planned Parenthood).

Relationships are learned by how parents interact. Warmth and love are sensed; how much affection they show in front of kids—that's education. Showing your children you're open to

questions is more important than facts. If you're not sure of the answer, look it up. Being an askable parent doesn't mean you have to agree with your teenager's views, states Leftoff.

"One red-faced talk does not a complete sex education make," says Linda Peterson (Outreach Educator at the Planned Parenthood Association, Miami Valley, Ohio).

Any time you can open up the lines of communication with your kids about what's on their minds, that's good.

Runaways

A shocking report on the condition of children in the U.S. was made recently to the president: one million children run away from home each year.

Many thousands of kids who run away, come from good homes, are good kids, whose parents love them and want to help.

No one is quite sure what goes wrong. It could be a build-up over a space of months or a few weeks and suddenly the situation erupts into the act of running away. Or perhaps it is a lack of the right verbal communication at the right time. With families moving around so much today, there are often no grandparents, uncles or aunts around to confide in. Some young people feel they are not getting through to their parents—that they do not bear any weight with them. Some feel smothered with overprotective love. Since more girls than boys run away, this might be an indication that girls feel discriminated against. They are usually asked more questions, their friends are checked out more closely, the curfew hours are stricter. Some want their independence early.

After the child has run away, of course, communication is severed until he/she decides to return. In the meantime, after the parents have contacted all the youth agencies and talked

with all of their child's friends, all they can do is wait and hope. The waiting might be made easier if parents could realize that most runaways want the parents to want them back. Most of them enjoy the experience and later like to tell of the "rough" time they had.

"Dear Abby" often serializes this unique communication. It is for the runaway who would like to contact his/her parents.

"PLEASE CALL"—How Runaways Can Establish Communication With Their Families

"Call this toll-free number, 1-800-231-6946," says Abby, "an operator will take your call and telephone your parents anywhere in the United States with a message from you. There will be no lecturing or recriminations. Your call will not be traced. Only one question will be asked: Do you need anything? If you do you will be told where you can get it, free."

PORNO

The son had been taught the parents' moral values.

One Parent: "When I found pornographic literature in my 17-year old son's room, I decided to ignore it and not confront him with it."

Another: "I believe parents should confront their youngsters. They should not rest their case, so to speak. Since he is living in their home he should respect his parents by living by their standards and morals. The parents should insist that he live accordingly."

The son's individuality or independence should not be taken away, nor his spirit crushed, but he should be made to realize that he must respect other people and their moral standards, especially his parents.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, CIGARETTES

Going from childhood to adulthood demands a great amount of responsibility and maturity. Teens have to cope with many hurdles—anxiety, tension, doubt, conflict, frustration, and patience. Most of them make it O.K. The others find drugs or alcohol an imagined answer. The more self-dependence, the less drug-dependence.

The best guards against these abuses are attitudes and skills on the part of parents to communicate to their children that they are human and helpful even when they make demands, set limits and insist on values.

When Nonverbal Communication Is Better

The son had recently learned to drive. Father was concerned that Bob might have something to drink at the party, and the fact he would be driving home.

"I don't see how one small drink could hurt," his son insisted.

Father obtained films from driver-education classes showing serious, fatal accidents wherein alcohol was involved. He asked his son to look at the pictures and make a decision. After he had watched, the son didn't say anything except, "I get the point."

Smoking

When young people feel their parents would disapprove of their smoking, they sometimes do it out of sight. They try to justify such action by saying mother and dad would worry if they knew but if they don't know, they won't worry. Authorities advise that if a teen is absolutely convinced that he wants to smoke cigarettes he should talk it over with his parents to see how they feel about it.

'Parents Who Care'

"Worried, and in many cases frightened, Bay Area parents have joined 'Parents Who Care,' a fast-growing group designed to combat adolescent drinking and pot smoking," says Carol Pogash in the *San Francisco Examiner*, January, 1981.

The program's aim is to change the social scene among teens who participate in pot and alcohol use. This is being done through parent education, community awareness and "fun" alternatives, such as hikes, bike rides, ice skating and roller skating. Parents hold workshops and coffees and invite other parents to discuss ways to give alcohol-free, drug-free parties. A theme party might be one way.

At one get-together, parents introduced their teens to neat appearing college students who had made a decision not to participate in the drug and alcohol "norm."

'Parents Who Care' is not only for those parents with a problem already but for those concerned with prevention.

Through education of parents and children and cooperation and communication within families and in schools, the problem is being attacked effectively and successfully.

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SUMMATION

SUMMING UP: Dr. Grant gives these rules for enhancing communication in the family:

Be willing to recognize the importance of communication and
Be willing to improve
Plan time for positive communication
Respect the personality and self-esteem of your children
Be sure the message received is the message sent
Clarify the nonverbal signals
Listen with your undivided attention

He adds, "When it comes to teaching children, actions always speak louder than words. A parent's example is the most powerful teaching tool—for good or ill—a parent has."

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COMMUNICATION QUOTES

"Communication is the key to settling the undeclared wars which so often leave both parent and child angry, confused, and regretful," Dr. Haim G. Ginott

"The thing that impresses me most about America is the way parents obey their children," Edward, Duke of Windsor.

"Silence gives consent, or a horrible feeling that nobody's listening," Franklin P. Jones

"The purpose of all higher education is to make men aware of what was and what is, to incite them to probe into what may be. It seeks to teach them to understand, to evaluate, to communicate," Otto Kleppner

"Extremists think 'communication' means agreeing with them," Leo Rosten

"It is a luxury to be understood," Ralph Waldo Emerson

"What a man really says when he says that someone else can be persuaded by force, is that he himself is incapable of more rational means of communication," Norman Cousins

"Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after," Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"Be obscure clearly," E. B. White

"To win a teenager's attention, listen with a third ear and respond with a sympathetic tongue. To win his heart, express for him clearly what he said vaguely. To win his respect, be authentic, having the words fit the feelings," Dr. Ginott

From the poet, Kahlil Gibran—

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of
Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet
they belong not to you.
So now let us with patience, humility,
trust, and firmness undertake the exciting
sometimes frustrating, never dull job of
being parents with a sense of commitment
and dedication.